



King County

2013/2014 BUDGET

Executive Proposed

Office of the King County Executive
Office of Performance, Strategy
and Budget

September 2012

King County, Washington



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Use this page for notes.



King County

Dow Constantine

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September 24, 2012

The Honorable Larry Gossett
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Gossett:

I am pleased to transmit my proposed budget for 2013 / 2014 and accompanying legislation. This budget reflects our success in reforming King County's finances and continues our work in putting the County on a sustainable path. We transition most county funds to biennial budgeting with the exception of the General Fund, Public Health, Parks, Finance and the Business Resource Center. The budget totals \$7.6 billion overall with \$684 million for the General Fund.

I am very pleased that this budget sustains most current services in many of our funds, including the General Fund. It includes investments that will help us improve efficiency and customer service in the future. To further bolster the County's finances, this budget adds additional funds to the Rainy Day reserve, and maintains the General Fund's unreserved balance at 6.5%.

This budget reflects challenging economic times and the economy of our county is recovering. Sales tax revenues are projected to grow, but not at the rates we experienced in the middle of the last decade; property tax collections have a variety of restrictions and have been weakened by the soft housing market. Through a combination of efficiencies and reductions in workload, we were able to balance the proposed General Fund budget.

This budget, that preserves most services, reflects our success in finding efficiencies and reducing the growth rate in county costs. Much of this is due to our partnerships with employees and their labor unions. Working together, we have significantly reduced the growth in health care costs by helping our employees become healthier and by creating economic incentives to use health services more wisely. In addition, we are starting to see the impacts of using Lean practices in our government. The proposed budget reflects several efficiencies from Lean, including a \$500,000 reduction in Sheriff's Office overtime as a result of more efficient geographic scheduling, and significant improvements in processing time for building permits and vehicle license renewals.

Not all of the county's funds are in good financial condition. Transit services are maintained in this budget because of the County Council's 2011 action to approve the Congestion Reduction Charge (CRC) authorized by the Legislature. This added revenue, coupled with a wide range of efficiencies in routing, scheduling, health care costs, and other items, has allowed Transit to maintain service levels and add new Rapid Ride service. However, Transit's revenue challenges will reemerge in mid-2014 when the CRC expires. Unless the Legislature authorizes a new permanent revenue source, significant service reductions will begin in the fall of 2014.

Funding for our Road Services Division continues to decline and is inadequate to maintain roads as we have in the past. The combination of annexations, declining property values in the unincorporated areas, lower gasoline tax revenues, and higher materials costs have led to significant reductions in staffing and programs in Roads. The proposed Roads budget includes major staffing and service reductions in 2013. In addition, unless a new revenue source is created in mid-2013; additional reductions will need to occur in both 2013 and 2014, which will lead to further degradation of maintenance and emergency response.

While this budget reflects our success in finding efficiencies and maintaining services, we cannot stop there. This is an effort that must occur every year and in every agency. I look forward to working with the County Council and our separately-elected officials in these efforts.

If you have any questions, please contact Dwight Dively, Director, Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget at 263-9727.

Sincerely,



Dow Constantine
King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers
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